

Why the Soviet Colonel Changed His Colors

The Penkovsky Papers: Part I

By Oleg Penkovsky

MY NAME is Oleg Vladimirovich Penkovsky. I was born April 23, 1919, in the Caucasus, in the city of Ordzhonikidze (formerly Vladikavkaz), in the family of a salaried worker; Russian by nationality, by profession an officer of military intelligence with the rank of colonel.

I have received higher education. I have been a member of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union since March,

1940. I am married; as dependents I have my wife, one daughter and my mother.

I have never been on trial for criminal or political offense. I have been awarded 13 government decorations (five orders and eight medals). I am a resident of the city of Moscow, and live on Maxim Gorky Embankment, House No. 36, Apartment 59.

I am beginning the notes that follow to explain my thoughts about the sys-

tem in which I live and my revolt against this system. I am fully aware of what I am setting out to do. I ask that you believe in my sincerity, in my dedication to the real struggle for peace.

I must write hurriedly, hoping that I will some day have the time to elaborate or explain. I am unable to do this all at once—or to write all I know and feel—for the simple physical lack of time and space.



Col. Penkovsky, flanked by guards, hears the death sentence at his Moscow trial May 11, 1963.

When I write at home, I disturb my family's sleep (our apartment is only two rooms and typing is very noisy). During working hours, I am always busy, running like a madman between the visiting (foreign) delegations and military intelligence headquarters and the offices of my Committee.

My evenings are generally occupied; it is part of my job. When I visit my friends in the country, it is worse. Someone may have asked what I am doing. Here at home, at least I have

a hiding place in my desk. My family could not find it even if they knew. And they know nothing.

It is a lonely struggle. As I sit here in Moscow in my apartment and write down my thoughts and observations, I can only hope that the persons in whose hands they eventually fall will find them of interest and use them for the truth they say.

White Russian Parentage

My father was a lieutenant in the White Army, during which my father

was lost. Mother told me that my father saw me for the first and last time when I was only four months old.

My father was a lieutenant in the White Army. I learned this only recently. My father fought against the Soviets. I still do not think they know the whole truth about him. If the State Security forces had known all along that he was in the White Army (although I was only a few months old at the time), every door would have been closed to him. I am asking for membership in the party and especial

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Yet I began my life as a believer in the Soviet system. I was brought up in a Soviet environment and from the very first, when I went at 18 to the

Second Kiev Artillery School, I wanted to be a commander in the Soviet army.

During the war, I commanded a battalion. By the end of the war, I was a lieutenant colonel. After one action, Marshal Konev recommended me for the Military Staff College.

In 1945, I began the three-year course at the Frunze Military Academy and in 1948 I pinned on my chest the diamond-shaped insignia of a Frunze graduate. At the end of 1949, I was transferred to the Military Diplomatic Academy, the training school for the military intelligence service.

I learned how to conduct military espionage and completed a three-year course in the English language, which I mastered, I believe, fairly well. In September, 1958, after serving as assistant military attache in Turkey, I was sent to the Dzerzhinsky Military Engineering Academy to attend a nine-month academic course for the study of missile weapons.

Deeds Belied Words

IT WAS DURING the struggles of World War II that I first became convinced that it was not the Communist Party which moved and inspired us all to walk the fighting road from Stalingrad to Berlin. There was something else behind us: Russia.

Even more than the war itself, my eyes were opened by my work with the higher authorities and general officers of the Soviet army. I happened to marry a general's daughter and quickly found myself in a society of the Soviet upper class. I was one of the privileged.

But I soon realized that their praise of the party and communism was only in words. In their private lives, they lie, deceive, scheme against each other, intrigue, inform, cut each other's throats. In pursuit of more money and advancement for themselves, they become informants for the State Security on their friends and fellow workers. Their children despise everything Soviet, watch only foreign movie films and look down on ordinary people.

Our communism, which we have been building for 45 years, is a fraud. I myself am a part of this fraud. Some disease or infection is gnawing and eating at our country from within.

The ideals that so many of our fathers and brothers died for have turned out to be nothing more than a bluff and a deceit. I know the army and there are many of us in the officer corps who feel the same way. But they are afraid to unite for action. So we all live separately. Each one here is alone.

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Government of Adventurers

I ASSOCIATE with highly placed, important people: ministers and marshals, general and senior officers, members of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. I praise our leaders, but inside me I wish them death.

Khrushchev's is a government of adventurers covering themselves with the banner of the struggle for peace.

But Khrushchev has not renounced war. He is quite prepared to begin a war if circumstances turn favorable to him. This he must not be permitted to do.

In the past, our general staff and our foreign representatives condemned the concept of surprise attack such as Hitler used. Now they have come around to the viewpoint that there is great advantage to the side which makes a sudden massive attack first.

From what I have learned and what I have heard, I know now that the leaders of our Soviet state are the willing provocateurs of an atomic war. At one time or another they may lose their heads entirely and start an atomic war. See what Khrushchev is doing over Berlin.

In Moscow, I have lived in a nuclear nightmare. I know the extent of their preparations. I know the poison of the new military doctrine as outlined in the top-secret Special Collection—the plan to strike first at any cost.

I know the design of the new missiles and their warheads. I am describing them to my friends in the West. Imagine the horror of a 50-megaton bomb with an explosive force almost twice what one expects. The people of Moscow congratulated themselves on this.

Using the Peacelovers

THE SOVIET leaders know that the Western world, and especially the Americans, do not wish an atomic war. They try to use the Western desire for peace to their own advantage.

It is necessary somehow to drain the energy and to divert the great material and living strength of the Soviet Union to peaceful purposes — not to bring about a great world conflict. I think it is necessary to have meetings secretly conducted, not summit meetings. Those Khrushchev welcomes. He will use the decisions reached at summit meetings to increase his own prestige.

This you must understand. That is why I write these observations of mine to the people of the United States and Britain. I ask only that you believe me. I am not a traitor. I am not a spy. I am your soldier, pledged to

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carry out everything which is entrusted to me.

In presenting the above, I want to say that I have not begun work for my new cause with empty hands. I understand perfectly well that to correct words and thoughts, one must add concrete proof confirming these words. I have had and do have now a definite capability for doing this.

Condensed from the forthcoming book, "The Penkovsky Papers," © 1965, Doubleday & Co., Inc.

MONDAY: Penkovsky maneuvers an official trip to London to meet Western intelligence officers.

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